IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A retaining clip for use with an intervertebral disc replacement device having a screw flange defining at least one bone screw hole for receipt therethrough of a bone screw and defining at least one mounting hole and a bone screw inserted through said at least one bone screw hole, the retaining clip comprising:

a body member having a first side and at least one attachment member protruding from said first side thereof in communicating relation with said at least one mounting hole of said intervertebral disc replacement device, said at least one attachment member having a tapered structure such that a protruding extent of the at least one attachment member gradually increasingly protrudes from said first side of said body member, from a lower portion of the protruding extent that is flush with said first side of said body member to an upper portion of the protruding extent that is protruded from said first side of said body member, the gradual increased defining a sloped surface on a convergent path with said first side of said body member;

a hook flange extending from said body member in a first direction for clipping retention of said first side of said body member against said flange of said intervertebral disc replacement device, at least one surface of said hook flange opposing and extending parallel to said first side of said body member; and

at least one lateral flange extending from said body member in a second direction coplanar with said body member, the first and second directions being perpendicular to each other, said at least one lateral flange partially received over a portion of said bone screw to prevent said bone screw from backing out of said at least one bone screw hole.

wherein said at least one attachment member is received within said at least one mounting hole when said hook flange is clippingly retained and said tapered structure allows easier receipt of said at least one attachment member into said at least one mounting hole.

2. (previously presented) The retaining clip according to claim 1, further including two lateral flanges extending from said body member in substantially opposite directions, each of said lateral flanges partially received over a portion of a corresponding bone screw to prevent said bone screws from backing out of corresponding bone screw holes existing in said flange of said intervertebral disc replacement device.

Claim 3 (canceled)

4. (currently amended) The retaining clip according to claim ~~3~~1, said hook flange including a clip member protruding therefrom in a direction toward said first side of said body member for receipt within a recess in said flange of said intervertebral disc replacement device.

5. (currently amended) The retaining clip according to claim ~~3~~1, said at least one mounting hole being of a substantially circular diameter and said at least one attachment member being correspondingly, substantially rounded in configuration.

Claim 6 (canceled)

7. (currently amended) The retaining clip according to claim ~~3~~1, said receipt of said at least one attachment member into said at least one mounting hole is a snapping attachment.

8. (currently amended) A prepackaged, sterile retaining clip assembly for use with an intervertebral disc replacement device having a screw flange defining at least one bone screw hole for receipt therethrough of a bone screw and defining at least one mounting hole and a bone screw inserted through said at least one bone screw hole, the retaining clip, comprising:

an applicator having first and second applicator arms, each of said first and second applicator arms extending in substantially the same direction out from a common bending elbow;

at least one retaining clip removingly secured to a first end of said first applicator arm, said at least one retaining clip including:

a body member having a first side and at least one attachment member protruding from said first side thereof in communicating relation with said at least one mounting hole of said intervertebral disc replacement device, said at least one attachment member having a tapered structure such that a protruding extent of the at least one attachment member gradually increasingly protrudes from said first side of said body member, from a lower portion of the protruding extent that is flush with said first side of said body member to an upper portion of the protruding extent that is protruded from said first side of said body member, the gradual increased defining a sloped surface on a convergent path with said first side of said body member;

a hook flange extending from said body member in a first direction, at least one surface of said hook flange opposing and extending parallel to said first side of said body member; and

at least one lateral flange extending from said body member in a second direction coplanar with said body member, the

first and second directions being perpendicular to each other; and

an enclosure for holding said applicator and said at least one retaining clip removingly secured thereto,

wherein said at least one attachment member is received within said at least one mounting hole when said hook flange is clippingly retained and said tapered structure allows easier receipt of said at least one attachment member into said at least one mounting hole.

9. (previously presented) The retaining clip assembly according to claim 8, said first applicator arm having a protruding member extending from said first end thereof for removingly, secured engagement with an opening extending at least partially into a body member of said first retaining clip

10. (previously presented) The retaining clip assembly according to claim 9, further comprising a second retaining clip removingly secured to a first end of said second applicator arm.

11. (previously presented) The retaining clip assembly according to claim 10, said second applicator arm having a protruding member extending from said first end thereof for removingly, secured engagement with an opening extending at least partially into a body member of said second retaining clip.

12. (previously presented) The retaining clip assembly according to claim 8, said enclosure made of a non-permeable material.

13. (previously presented) The retaining clip assembly according to claim 8, wherein said enclosure is sealed and

devoid of substantially most air so as to maintain said sterile condition of said retaining clip assembly.

14. (previously presented) The retaining clip assembly according to claim 13, wherein said enclosure is made of a material that is easily breached for opening of said enclosure and access to said retaining clip assembly.

15. (currently amended) A prepackaged, sterile retaining clip assembly for an intervertebral disc replacement device, comprising:

an applicator having first and second applicator arms, each of said first and second applicator arms extending in substantially the same direction out from a common bending elbow;

a first retaining clip directly and removingly secured to only a first end of said first applicator arm;

a second retaining clip directly and removingly secured to only a first end of said second applicator arm while said first clip is directly and removingly secured to said first end of said first applicator arm; and

an enclosure for holding said applicator and said first and second retaining clips removingly secured thereto.